i) M/s Star Cruises for operating its cruise from Mumbai and Goa to Lakshadweep.

ii) M/s Indian Ocean Cruise Ltd. for operating its cruises from Goa to Lakshadweep *via* Mangalore, Cochin and Trivandrum.

(c) No such objection of Ministry of Environment and Forests has been received in Ministry of Tourism.

(d) Does not arise.

Clearance for Air Kerala.

*211. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal for the formation of a Budget Airline 'Air Kerala' is pending with Government for necessary clearance;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal along with the reasons for the delay in giving clearance;

(c) whether Government are considering relaxation of existing conditions for operating international flights for the above proposal as a special case; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Though no proposal for formation of any airline by the name 'Air Kerala' is pending with the Government for clearance, the Government of Kerala have informed that a public limited company, 'Air Kerala International Services Limited' has been registered as a Special Purpose Vehicle for a budget airline project. Government of Kerala has requested this Ministry for exemption to the proposed airline from the stipulated conditions relating to fleet size and the length of operation in the domestic sector for an airline to be considered for international operations. This request was not considered as the existing provisions of minimum fleet size of 20 aircraft and experience of 5 years continuous operations in domestic sector for permitting an Indian scheduled carrier to

operate international services, are considered essential for safe and reliable operations on international routes. Further, Gulf routes are presently reserved only for Air India and Indian Airlines.

Financial assistance for development of museums

*212. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government provide financial assistance for the development of museums under the scheme for promotion of museums:

(b) if so, the criteria prescribed in this regard;

(c) the number of applications received in this regard during each of the last two years and the current year so far;

(d) the details of financial assistance sanctioned and released during the above period; and

(e) by when the pending applications are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir. Financial Assistance is provided under the scheme "Promotion and Strengthening of Regional and Local Museums".

(b) While considering the proposal under this scheme *inter alia* the nature of the organisation, characteristics of the Museum including the period of its existence and the purpose for which assistance is sought are taken into consideration.

(c) The number of applications received during the last two years and the current year, so far, are as under:

Sl. No.	Year	No. of Applications Received
1.	2004-2005	259
2.	2005-2006	92
3.	2006-2007	91